Money Left At Guyana Aimed At Death Contracts, Aide Says

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SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A People's Temple aide says Rev. Jim Jones planned to use the large sum of money found at the Guyana jungle settlement to pay for death contracts on his enemies, the San Francisco Examiner reported Sunday.

The newspaper quoted Terri Buford, who reportedly had responsibility for finances at the camp, as saying that cult followers in California were "to stay alive at all costs and carry out the assassinations in the event of Jones' death."

The FBI has said it is investigating reports that Jones had compiled a "hit list" that included journalists, politicians and defectors, but no such list has surfaced.

The Guyanese authorities have reported $1 million was found at the jungle settlement at Jonestown after the mass suicide-murder of more than 900 persons on Nov. 18. Unconfirmed reports have put the figure at up to $3 million.

"I was told the money found in the jungle was to be used for putting out contracts on people," Ms. Buford said in an interview. She did not identify persons on the alleged hit list.

In Berkeley, two temple defectors said that Jones used to brag about connections with organized crime.

"He used to say that if anybody gave him trouble, he ...onderful Mafia contacts. We didn't know if Jones was serious or not," said Al Mills, a Jones follower for six years who helped found a halfway house for defectors.

Ms. Buford, who left the Guyana commune last Sept. 16 and later claimed she defected, was probably Jones' closest aide, according to members and former members.

"She's Jones' top avenger. No person in the church had a greater loyalty to him personally," said Tim Stoen, a former Jones aide and former assistant district attorney in San Francisco.

Ms. Buford, 26, who was not present during the suicide-murder ritual, said that some of the surviving temple followers could be members of a hit squad but that she did not know if a hit list now exists.

"Years ago . . . there was a physical hit list," Ms. Buford said. "I don't know if it was maintained over the years."

Ms. Buford and temple attorney Mark Lane held a secret meeting in San Jose Wednesday with U.S. Atty. William Hunter, San Francisco FBI chief Roy McKinnon and other federal officials.

Lane said he had asked for immunity from prosecution for Buford. But he said Hunter indicated it would not be necessary.

Buford put the total cash assets of the temple at $11 million, most of it in numbered bank accounts in Panama and Zurich, Switzerland.